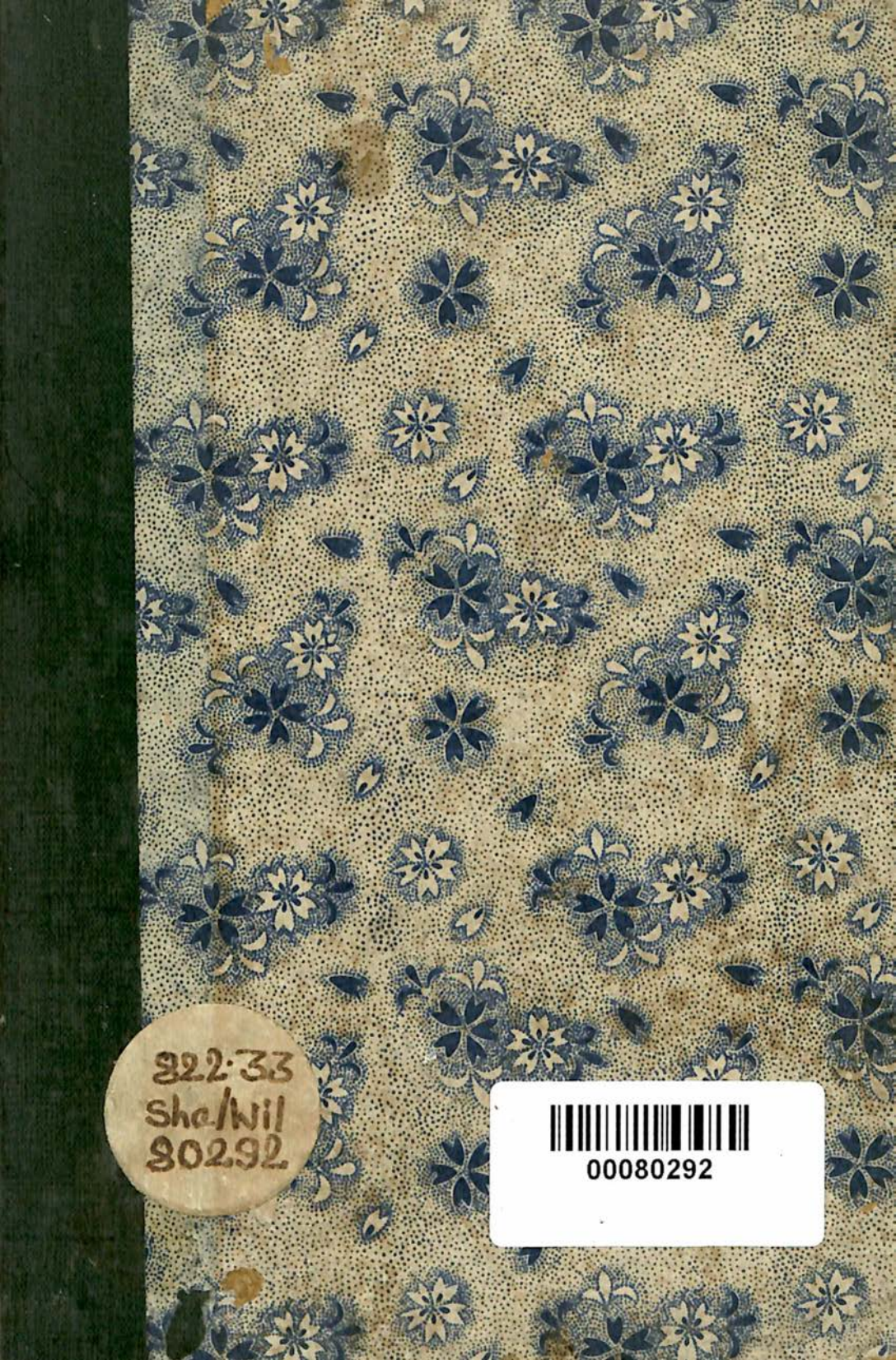
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THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
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SHAKSPEARE'S WILL.

THE Document here presented to the reader is not a copy, but an absolute reflection of the original Document, which contains not only an expression of the last wishes of the Poet, but also the only three entirely undisputed signatures from his pen which are known to exist. The Document is in itself of inestimable value; and a reproduction so perfect that in it neither the acutest lawyer nor the best microscopist could discover the slightest difference, must be also of comparatively great value.

The few words which we have to say will be strictly confined to the examination of the Will itself. Of its appearance our reproduction will give the best idea. For those who cannot read the crabbed hand of a lawyer of the seventeenth century, we append a copy in modern type. The Will is on three sheets of paper, fastened at the top, and each sheet is signed by the Poet. Malone's theory was, that Shakspeare, being weak and sick to death, signed the last sheet first—"By me Wm. Shakspeare,"—then the *left*-hand corner of the second sheet, and lastly the *right*-hand corner of the first sheet. It was at first thought that the Poet had spelt his name with an "a" in the last syllable; but Malone settled that there that letter really does not exist. The lawyer, with curious carelessness, has endorsed the Document in two places "Mr. Shackspere his Will," and the same words and spelling, and the date "Junii 16," meaning, we presume, not the 16th of June, but the month of June, 1616. An acute legal friend reads this crabbed date as "8 *und*(er) 16," *i.e.* eight words under sixteen folios. Possibly the suggestion is more ingenious than accurate.

Vicesimo quinto die January Mtii. Anno Regni Domini nostri Jacobi nunc Regis Angliæ, &c. decimo quarto, et Scotiæ xlix°. Annoque Domini 1616.

T. W^mj Shackspeare

In the name of God, Amen! I Willīm Shackspeare of Stratford vpon Avon, in the countie of warr. gent, in perfect health and memorie, god be praysed! doe make and Ordayne this my last will and testam^t in mann̄ and forme followeing; That ys to saye, ffirst, I Comend my Soule into the handes of god my Creator, hoping, and assuredlie beleeving, through th onelie merites of Jesus Christe my Saviour, to be made ptaker of lyfe everlastinge, And my bodye to the Earth whereof yt ys made. Item, I gyve and bequeath unto my Daughter Judyth, One hundred and ffyftie poundes of lawfull English money, to be paied unto her in mann̄ and forme followeing That ys to saye, One hundred poundes *in discharge of her marriage porcion* w^thin one yeare after my deceas, with consideracion after the rate of twoe shillinges in the pound for soe long tyme as the same shalbe unpaied unto her after my deceas, & the Fyftie poundes Residewe thereof, upon her Surrendring of or gyving of such sufficient Securitie as the overseers of this my Will shall like of, to Surrender or grante All her estate and right that shall discend or come unto her after my desceas, or that shee nowe hath, of in or to one Copiehold tenemente with thappurtennes, lyeing and being in Stratford upon Avon aforesaied, in the saied county of warr. being parcell or holden of the manno^r of Rowington, unto my Daughter Susanna Hall, & her heires for ever. Itm, I gyve and bequeath unto my saied Daughter Judith One hundred and ffyftie Poundes more, if shee, or Anie issue of her bodie, be Lyvinge att thend of three yeares next ensueing the Daie of the Date of this my Will, during w^ch tyme my executo^rs to paie her consideracon from my deceas according to the Rate aforesaied; And if she dye w^thin the saied tearme without issue of her bodye, then my will ys, and I doe gyve and bequeath One Hundred Poundes thereof to my Neece Elizabeth Hall, and the ffiftie Poundes to be sett fourth by my executo^rs during the lief of my Sister Johane Harte, and the use and proffitt thereof cominge, shalbe payed to my saied Sister Jone, and after her deceas the said l^li. shall Remaine Amongst the children of my saied Sister Equallie to be Devided Amongst them; But if my saied Daughter Judith be lyving att thend of the saied three Yeares, or anie yssue of her bodye, then my will ys, and soe I Devise and bequeath the saied Hundred and ffyftie Poundes to be sett out *by my executors and overseers* for the best benefitt of her and her issue, and *the stock* not *to be* paied unto her soe long as she shalbe marryed and Covert Baron! but my will ys, that she shall have the consideracion yearelie paied unto her during her lief, and after her deceas, the saied stock and consideracion to bee paied to her children, if she have anie, & if not, to her executours or assignes, she lyving the saied terme after my deceas: Provided that yf such husbond as she shall att thend of the saied three yeares be marryed unto, or at anie [tyme] after, doe sufficientlie Assure unto her, and thissue of her bodie landes awnswereable to the porcion by this my will gyven unto her, and to be adjudged soe by my executo^rs and overseers, then my will ys, that the said Cl^li. shalbe paied to such husbond as shall make such assurance, to his owne use. Itm, I gyve and bequeath unto my saied sister Jone xx^li, and all my wearing Apparrell, to be paied and delivered within one yeare after my deceas; and I doe will and devise unto her *the house* with thappurtenaunces in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her natural lief, under the yearlie rent of xij^d.

Itm, I gyve and bequeath

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unto her three sonnes, William Harte, [Thomas] Harte, & Michaell Harte, ffyve Poundes Apeece, to be paied within one Yeare after my decease. Itmm, I gyve and bequeath unto the saied Elizabeth Hall All my plate, except my brod silver and gilt bole, that I now have att the Date of this my will. Itmm, I gyve and bequeath unto the Poore of Stratford aforesaied tenn poundes; to Mr. Thomas Combe my Sword; to Thomas Russell, Esquier, ffyve poundes; & to Frauncis Collins of the Borough of warr. in the countie of warr. gentleman, thirteene poundes Sixe shillinges & Eight pence, to be paied within one Yeare after my Deceas. Item, I gyve & bequeath to *Hamlett Sadler* xxvi^{s} viijd^{d}, to buy him A Ringe; to *William Raynoldes, gent.* xxvi^{s} viij^{d}, *to buy him A Ringe;* to my godson Willim Walker xx^{s} in gold; to Anthonye Nashe, gent. xxvi^{s} viij^{d}; and to Mr. John Nashe, xxvi^{s} viij^{d}; *and to my ffellowes, John Hemyngs, Richard Burbage & Henry Cundell,* xxvi^{s} viij^{d} *Apeece, to buy them ringes.* Itm, I Gyve, will, bequeath, & devise unto my daughter Susanna Hall, *for better enabling of her to performe this my will, & towardes the performans thereof,* all that Capital messuage or tenemente, with tha ppurtenances *in Stratford aforesaid,* Called the New Place, wherein I nowe Dwell, and two Messuages or tenementes, with thapp'enncs, scitvat, lyeing, and being in Henley-streete, within the borough of Stratford aforesaied; And all my barnes, stables, orchardes, gardens, landes, tents, and hereditam^{ts} whatsoever, scitvat, lyeing, and being, or to be had, receyved, pceyved, or taken, wthin the Townes, Hamletes, Villages, ffieldes, and groundes of Stratford upon Avon, Old stratford, Bushopton, and Welcombe, or in anie of them, in the said countie of Warr. And alsoe All that messuage or tente, wth thapptennc̄s, wherein One John Robinson dwelleth, scituat, lyeng, and being, in the blackfriers in London nere the Wardrobe; and all othr my landes, tents, & hereditam^{ts} whatsoev$\bar{e}$r: To have & to hold All & singular the saied premisses, with their apprtenncs, unto the saied Susanna Hall, for & during the terme of her natural lief; & after her deceas to the first sonne of her bodie lawfullie yssueinge, & to the heires Males of the bodie of the saied first Sonne lawfully yssueinge; & for defalt of such issue, to the second Sonne of her bodie lawfullie issueinge, & to the heires males of the bodie of the said Second Sonne lawfully yssueing; & for defalt of such heires, to the third Sonne of the bodie of the saied Susanna lawfullie yssueinge, & to the heires males of the bodie of the saied third sonne lawfullie yssueing; & for defalt of such issue, the same soe to be and Remaine to the ffourth, ffyfth, sixte, and Seaventh sonnes of her body, lawfullie issueinge one after Anothr, & to the heires

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Males of the bodies of the said Fourth, fifth, Sixte, and Seaventh sonnes lawfullie yssueing, in such manner as yt is before Lymitted to be & Remaine to the first, second, and third Sonns of her bodie, & to their heires Males; & for defalt of such issue, the saied premisses to be and Remaine to my sayed Neece Hall, and the heires Males of her bodie lawfullie yssueing; And for defalt of such issue, to my Daughter Judith & the heires Males of her bodie lawfullie issueinge, And for defalt of such issue, to the Right heires of me the saied William Shackspeare for ever. Itm, I gyve unto my wief my second best bed, with the furniture. Itm, I gyve and bequeath to my saied Daughter Judith my broad silver gilt bole. All the rest of my goodes, Chattel, Leases, plate, Jewels, and houshold stuffe whatsoever, after my Dettes & Legacies paied, & my funerall expences discharged, I gyve, devise, & bequeath to my Sonne-in-Lawe, John Hall, gent. & my Daughter Susanna his wief, whom I ordaine and make executours of this my Last will and testament. And I doe intreat and Appoint *the saied* Thomas Russell, Esquier, and ffrauncis Collins, gent. to be overseers hereof, And doe Revoke All former wills, and publishe this to be my last will and testament. In Witness whereof I have hereunto put my hand, the Daie and Yeare first above written.

Witnes to the publyshing hereof, Fra. Collyns, Julyus Shawe, John Robinson, Hamnet Sadler, Robert Whattcott.

By me William Shakspeare.

*Probatum corā Magri Willii Byrde, Legum Dcorē Comiss. &c. xxjj.*do *die menss Junii, Anno Domini* 1616; *Juramo Johannis Hall, vnius executorum &c. cui &c. de bene &c. jurat Resvat ptate &c. Susanne Hall, alt executorum &c. cu venit petitur*

Invt. ext.

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(The Indorsement)

A reference to the Photograph will render needless any reference of ours to interlineations. The bequest of the second-best bed is one of them, and Malone says, "He had forgot her." The lawyer must have been unusually careless, even for one of those gentlemen who care not what loop-holes for litigation they leave. Shakspeare is spelt hap-hazard, and Condell as pronounced, Cundell. The result of an attentive perusal of the Will is, that to a non-legal mind there is left an impression that a not very respectful coldness existed between Shakspeare and his wife at the time of his decease; she being, as it were, "cut off" with a second-hand piece of furniture, all his property being specifically left to others. Mr. Charles Knight has, however, shown that she was entitled to dower to the extent of a third in the houses of Henley Street, New Place, and also in the lands at Stratford and elsewhere. Certain it is that Mrs. Shakspeare lived with her daughter and son-in-law at the New Place, and that, to judge from the somewhat fallacious standard of an epitaph, her daughter's husband loved, honoured, and revered her. The interlined passage of the Will leaves an unpleasant impression not easily removed, and many persons have thereon built the theory that Shakspeare, like Milton and Byron, was unhappily matched in wedlock. His love for his children, and his desire to perpetuate his race, even in the female branch, is evident, and to us remarkable.

The first blunder, on the very threshold of the Will, is curious—the abbreviation M^{tii}. March was originally written Januarii; as the year then began in March, the 25th of January in the fourteenth of James I. would be in the year 1615, and not in 1616, the year of the poet's decease.

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